



# Request For USDA State & Private Forestry Grant

Applicant: Georgia Forestry Commission P.O. Box 819 Macon, GA 31202

Project Name: "Creating A Legacy" Marketing Strategy

Project Lead: Larry Morris, 706-542-6880, lmorris@gfc.state.ga.us

**Project Proposal Abstract:** In FY '07 the Sustainable Community Forestry Program received an allocation of \$75,000 from the Forest Service's Washington Office. The purpose of the funding, secured through the efforts of Jim Hubbard, was to conduct marketing research revealing the degree of importance that urban and urban-interface customers attach to trees and canopy cover. The Georgia Forestry Commission contracted with the Georgia Urban Forest Council and (r)evolution partners, a professional market research firm, to conduct the study. The study found that the overriding concern of people is to leave a legacy for their children and generations to come.

With this research, the forestry community has a unique opportunity to develop marketing strategies that will motivate consumers to become involved in creating healthy environments for themselves and their children. This marketing strategy will develop on a regional scale and will involve partnerships with various groups. Additionally, through regional partnerships, we will explore the suitability of conducting and applying this marketing research to situations and constituents in two adjacent states.

**Partnering Agencies and Groups / Individuals:** (r)evolution partners; Manning Salvage & Lee; Trees Atlanta; Trees Columbus; Savannah Tree Foundation; Georgia Forestry Association; Georgia RC&D's; Department of Community Affairs/Keep Georgia Beautiful; Georgia Tree City USA's

**Project Location:** Throughout Georgia in metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas.

**Expected Completion Quarter:** End of the Fourth Quarter of Federal Fiscal Year 2009

**Total Federal Funding Request:** \$207,400

**Total Proposal Budget  
(Including Matching Funds):**

Cost Category	Requested Funds	Matching Funds	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$78,400	\$78,400
Materials & Supplies	\$1,400	\$20,000	\$21,400
Travel	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,000
Consultants	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$300,000
Overhead / Administration	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Equipment Usage / Rental	\$0	\$0	\$0
Printing	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTALS	\$207,400	\$207,400	\$414,800

**Project Description and Benefits:**

This proposal will raise consumer awareness and motivate consumers to engage in activities to create healthier community forests, thereby creating a legacy for future generations to enjoy. Professional consultants will help develop detailed messaging, select optimal methods, and identify the most appropriate marketing venues for message delivery in Georgia and participating states.

The "Creating a Legacy Marketing Strategy" project is designed to benefit our forest resources in the following ways relative to national interests:

Enhance Working Forest Landscape – Raising the awareness of urban and rural-urban interface residents of the value of working forest landscapes will help them understand the nature services those landscapes provide, and will empower them to make better educated decisions concerning long-range land use and land-use planning.

Protect Forests from Harm – Increasing awareness of the benefits of community and working forest landscapes can motivate citizens to progressively affect the political decision making process, including adoption of tree ordinances, BMPs, zoning and development, and prescribed burning. This proposal includes the development, translation and incorporation of Hispanic/Latino messaging into the GFC's automated 1-877-OK-2-BURN permit system.

Enhance Benefits Associated with Trees & Forests – Improved understanding of the value of community and working forests will motivate citizens to support activities that improve water quality and air quality, reduce the threat of wildfire, and minimize soil erosion.

The proposed project will have a positive impact on the following regional issues:

Fractured Forests – This project will result in an awareness of the synergistic benefits of connected community forests rather than isolated pockets of forest islands.

Wildland Fire and Forest Fuels – This project will enhance awareness among new residents of the wildland-urban interface of the benefits of prescribed burning to reduce fuel loads and to minimize the potential for catastrophic wildfires. Incorporation of Hispanic/Latino messaging into the GFC 1-877-OK-2-BURN system will reach a rapidly expanding sector of Georgia's population, thereby enabling this audience to use fire in a safer, legal manner.

Changing Forest Products Markets – This project will mesh with the current efforts toward expanding citizens' knowledge base of carbon sequestration and nature services (clean water, clean air, etc.) and the effective utilization of urban biomass.

Forest Health – This project will promote an increased awareness of the potential for exotic or invasive plants, insects, and diseases, and an increased understanding of what a healthy forest embodies.

Water Quality and Quantity – This project will elevate public awareness, thereby promoting more informed decisions in land-use planning and zoning with the ultimate goal of increasing canopy cover and the storm water benefits it provides.

**Project Evaluation Criteria Discussion:**

The "Creating a Legacy Marketing Strategy" project meets the established criteria in the following ways:

*National and Regional Relevance* – Dynamic population growth in participating states has placed increasing pressure on community and working forests. Georgia's population is on target to double by 2030, and the national growth rate continues at an ever-increasing pace. This proposal will bring awareness and motivation to the majority of individuals who have had little opportunity to be engaged in the stewardship of community trees and forests.

*Prioritization* – This proposal is a logical follow-up to the 2006-07 Market Research study that the USFS funded in Georgia. It is significant in that Georgia has had 23 of the fastest growing 100 counties in the United States since the beginning of the decade. In addition, the Savannah River corridor between Georgia and South Carolina is facing intense pressure from development and commerce. Likewise, the City of Chattanooga, TN is experiencing many of the same forest fragmentation and air and water quality issues that confront the North Georgia region.

*Meaningful Scale* – This project is statewide in scope and is proposed to cross state boundaries into South Carolina and Tennessee. It will transect numerous watersheds and will be especially pertinent in the rapidly expanding wildland-urban interface areas of the involved states.

*Collaboration* – This project will be a collaboration among state agencies, federal agencies, cities, private industry, and non-profit groups. A detailed list of collaborators can be found on page 1.

*Outcomes* – New messaging will be created to influence long range behavioral change in public perceptions and actions. Immediate outcomes will be the number of speaking engagements to non-traditional audiences, the number of people encountered at marketing venues, the number of mass media appearances, creation of Facebook and MySpace web pages, web page hits, and surveys completed. This project creates a template which can apply to other metropolitan areas in the region facing similar growth pressures.

*Technology* – This proposal will incorporate additional marketing research. It will also incorporate Internet tools, interactive surveys and other technology tools deemed effective in delivering our legacy messaging, such as Podcasts and webcasts.

*Integrated Delivery* – Tree City USAs, Keep America Beautiful affiliates, tree advocacy groups, and state forestry agencies will utilize consistent messaging to educate and motivate consumers into taking proactive steps in the conservation of community and working forests.

*Leverage* – Working with Marketing and Public Relations firms provides opportunities to leverage corporate resources.

*Influence Positive Change* – Concerns about the environment are on the rise, and there is an existing crisis in the limited opportunities that people have to positively affect their environment. Marketing analysis involving significant research in the areas of health and environment has shown that these elements are increasingly important. As revealed in the recent market study by (r)evolution partners, "creating a legacy" is an overarching need among many consumers. Creating a legacy is the essence of this proposal, and the messaging and research resulting from it will be a common thread for all participants.

*Timelines* – End of 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2008: select media specialist and marketing firm and sign contracts; End of 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2008: complete market research and development of marketing plan and message points. End of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2009: meet with project partners and discuss messaging and marketing strategies. Beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2009: implement marketing strategy. End of 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2009: evaluate marketing strategy.